

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 IO-13

MCT-01 /114 W

-----122544 260626Z /12

R 251203Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8563

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 05046

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINS, SHUM, PGOV, IR

SUBJ: INTERNAL SITUATION: UNIVERSITIES TO THE FORE

REF: TEHRAN 4806

SUMMARY: A FEW SMALL INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE, ARREST OF 10 IN QOM, PLUS MORE PROMINENT DIFFICULTIES WITH UNIVERSITIES HAVE MARKED WEEK JUST PAST. NUMBER OF MAJLES DEPUTIES TO INCREASE SEVERAL GROUPS HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS OR OTHERWISE SUPPORTED GOI STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE. BAR ASSOCIATION INTERNAL STRUGGLE PITS DISSIDENTS AGAINST ESTABLISHMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. JUST A FEW INCIDENTS OF REPORTED VIOLENCE MARKED PREVIOUS WEEK IN IRAN. MAY 17, FIVE PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED IN SIRJAN FOR BREAKING INTO BUILDINGS AND IN REZAYIEH MAY 22, NUMBER OF RIOTERS (PRESS SAYS 22) WERE ARRESTED FOR MOVING FROM BAZAAR TO BREAKING WINDOWS AT THREE BANK SADERAT BRANCHES.

2. PROBABLY MOST INTERESTING AND SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS WERE IN QOM, WHERE AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI SPOKE TO
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LARGE GROUP OF STUDENTS MAY 20, AFTER HIS TALK, NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHOM CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE IDENTIFIES AS KHOMEINI SUPPORTERS AGITATED CROWD AND BEGAN DEMONSTRATING. POLICE CAME IN AND BROKE UP GROUP, ARRESTING ABOUT TEN. PRESS ACCOUNT OF INCIDENT LIMITED TO NOTICE THAT TEN WERE ARRESTED. OTHER SOURCES TELL US THAT POST TWO WEEKS HAVE SEEN MANY OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS IN QOM, AND THAT CITY

REMAINS TENSE. EMBASSY INFORMED BY OBSERVER THAT ARMY, INCLUDING ARMOR, WHICH HAD BEEN IN CITY THROUGH MAY 20 WAS REMOVED EARLY THIS WEEK.

3. UNIVERSITIES HAVE BEEN SCENE OF MUCH ACTIVITY, WITH CLASSES CANCELLED AT MOST SCHOOLS OR PARTS OF MOST SCHOOLS. EXCEPTIONS ARE SMALLER TEHRAN UNIVERSITIES WHERE EXAMS ARE IN PROGRESS, AND TEHRAN UNIVERSITY, WHICH ANNOUNCED MAY 24 THAT CLASSES WOULD RESUME AND THOSE NOT ATTENDING WOULD BE COUNTED ABSENT (AND PRESUMABLY BOUNCED OUT OF SCHOOL WHEN THEY HAVE REACHED THEIR "CUT" LIMIT). MILD RIOTING OCCURRED AT NATIONAL AND REZAYIEH UNIVERSITIES MAY 21, WITH SOME WINDOWS BROKEN. PRESS OVER PAST FEW DAYS HAS FEATURED TABRIZ' AZARBADEGAN UNIVERSITY, WHERE CHANCELLOR MORTEZAVI RESIGNED MAY 21. DEPUTY CHANCELLOR QOBAD FATHEY WAS NAMED ACTING CHANCELLOR, BUT HIS SITUATION STILL SOMEWHAT UNSETTLED BECAUSE SHAH HAS NOT YET ACCEPTED MORTEZAVI'S RESIGNATION FORMALLY. AZARBADEGAN UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MET MAY 24 TO DISCUSS REOPENING, BUT APPARENTLY NO DECISION REACHED. U.S. TABRIZ CONSUL METRINKO HAS LEARNED THAT FACULTY AND STAFF AT AZARBADEGAN CALLED FOR END TO PRESENCE OF SECURITY FORCES ON CAMPUS AND RELEASE WITH NO PENALTIES FOR STUDENTS WHO HAD DEMONSTRATED AND BEEN ARRESTED IN MAY 8 RIOTS WHEN TWO STUDENTS WERE KILLED. SITUATION REMAINS DIFFICULT AND CONFLICT ON CAMPUS MAY HAVE BEEN MAJOR REASON FOR CHANCELLOR'S
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RESIGNATION.

4. BIGGEST EMERGENT BROUHAHA IS AT TEHRAN'S ARYAMEHR UNIVERSITY, WHERE FACULTY HAS CEASED TEACHING IN PROTEST AGAINST PROJECTED MOVE OF SCHOOL TO NEW ISFAHAN CAMPUS NEXT YEAR. (STUDENTS WERE ALREADY ON STRIKE) ACCORDING TO MEMBER OF 27-MAN UNIVERSITY SENATE, WHICH IS INDEPENDENT BODY UNIQUE IN IRANIAN ACADEMIC CIRCLES, FACULTY PROTEST AT MOVE BEGAN TWO YEARS AGO, WITH VISITS TO THEN-PRIME-MINISTER HOVEYDA. RECENT CALL ON CURRENT PRIME MINISTER AMOUZEGAR REAFFIRMED GOI'S INTENTION TO MOVE SCHOOL. RULES FOR NEW CAMPUS HAVE BEEN DRAWN TO CURTAIL INDEPENDENCE OF UNIVERSITY SENATE; THIS FACT IS SEEN AS REAL REASON FOR GOI WISH TO DISCONTINUE USE OF TEHRAN CAMPUS (DESPITE OBVIOUS NEED FOR ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN IRAN). TALK GOING AROUND ARYAMEHR FACULTY IS THAT POSSIBLE COMPROMISE WILL EVENTUALLY INVOLVE SOME LOSS OF FACULTY ADMINISTRATIVE FREEDOM IN EXCHANGE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 05046

FOR KEEPING ALL (OR PART) OF SCHOOL IN TEHRAN. STUDENT
GROUPS IMMEDIATELY MOVED TO SUPPORT FACULTY,
WHICH HAS ANNOYED MORE MODERATE TEACHERS BECAUSE ARYAMEHR
FACULTY PREROGATIVES THUS BEING TIED IMPLICITLY INTO
DISSIDENCE PROBLEMS. SOURCE ALSO SAID FOUR SENATE
MEMBERS HAD RECEIVED THREATS FROM "UNDERGROUND COMMITTEE
FOR VENGEANCE" WITHIN PAST WEEK.

5. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS ANNOUNCED THAT FOR THE 1979
MAJLES ELECTIONS, NUMBER OF MAJLES DEPUTIES WILL BE
EXPANDED FROM PRESENT 268 TO 335 TO REFLECT POPULATION
CHANGES. THIS IS PURSUANT TO LAW WHICH REQUIRES GOI TO
REASSESS MAJLES REPRESENTATION ON BASIS OF CENSUS EVERY
TEN YEARS. MAJLES DEPUTIES INVOLVED WITH REFORMS TOLD
EMBOFFS OTHER MAJOR REFORM WHICH WILL BE ENACTED IS
SINGLE MEMBER LISTS FOR CITIES, WHICH HAVE UNTIL NOW
ELECTED ALL DEPUTIES AT LARGE. UNDER NEW LEGISLATION,
TEHRAN WILL BE DIVIDED INTO 45 DISTRICTS, AND EACH MEMBER
WILL BE ELECTED FROM GIVEN AREA (ALL WERE CHOSEN "AT-
LARGE" IN 1975). THIS REFORM WELCOMED BY VIRTUALLY
EVERYBODY, INCLUDING MORE MODERATE DISSIDENTS WITH WHOM
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WE HAVE DISCUSSED IT. SOME IRANIAN OBSERVERS HAVE NOTED
THIS MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER TO HAVE "MORE REPRESENTATIVE"
MAJLES IF RESURGENCE PARTY CANDIDATE SELECTION MACHINERY
IS NOT RPT NOT OPERATED TO EXCLUDE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER

OF MORE MODERATE NON-ESTABLISHMENT TYPES FROM RUNNING.

6. GROUP OF EDITORS, SUB-EDITORS, AND REPORTERS HAS REPORTEDLY WRITTEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER PRAISING GOI MEASURES TO COMBAT "DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS", AND THANKING GOI FOR "OPENING UP THE NATIONAL POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE", AND ALLOWING DISCUSSION AND EXPRESSION OF OPINION ON ALL MATTERS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. WOMEN'S GROUP HAS MADE SIMILAR OFFERING (TO BE REPORTED SEPARATELY).

6. IN RARE PUBLIC OUTBURST, NUMBER OF YOUNG LAWYERS HAVE CHARGED THAT BAR ASSOCIATION'S OUTGOING BOARD WAS A "DO-NOTHING" GROUP. DISPUTE ERUPTED INTO PRESS MAY 24 WHEN OUTGOING BAR CHAIRMAN JALALI NAINI REFUSED TO COMMENT ON CHARGES AND SAID HE MUST REMAIN NEUTRAL IN MATTER BECAUSE HE IS CHAIRMAN OF ELECTIONS COMMITTEE. STORY ALSO REPORTED SPEECH OF YOUNGER LAWYERS' REPRESENTATIVE, HASSANQLIO KATEBI, AT A PROVINCIAL MEETING WHICH INDICATED YOUNGER LAWYERS HAD MET WITH PRIME MINISTER AND URGED LAWYERS BE CONSULTED IN PREPARATION OF LAWS. YOUNGER GROUP ALSO WANTS GOI GUARANTEES THAT LAWYERS WHO DEFEND "UNPOPULAR" DEFENDANTS WILL NOT BE PENALIZED. WE UNDERSTAND FROM SEVERAL LAWYERS WITH FRIENDS ON BAR ASSOCIATION COUNCIL THAT YOUNGER GROUP PLANS TO MOUNT SERIOUS TAKEOVER ATTEMPT DURING FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS.

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